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# GREATER TORONTO CONSTRUCTION TIMES

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## INSIDE

- Woodcastle Construction Ltd.
- Alliance Roofing
- Maher Construction
- Colonial Building Restoration

## Landmark Toronto Hotel Receives Major Facelift

By: Construction Times Staff

Toronto's oldest, continuously-operating hotel is getting a major facelift. Maher Construction Inc. is the construction manager responsible for restoring the Gladstone Hotel, located in the heart of the city's art and design

district at Gladstone Avenue and Queen Street West, to its former glory. Work on the ambitious renovation project got underway last May. Expected completion date is this summer. Maher Construction Inc., of Dufflaw Road in Toronto, is performing the facelift for the landmark hotel's current owners,

the Zeidler family, in conjunction with Zeidler Partnership Architects. According to Larry Maher, of Maher Construction, the Gladstone Hotel was built 115 years ago and is the oldest operating hotel in the city. The ornate, four-storey, red clay brick building was originally designed by Toronto

architect George Miller. Zale Spodek, of Zeidler Partnership

Story continued on page 8

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# Gladstone Hotel



## Continued from page 1

Architects, is heading up the conceptual re-design of the building which was once a glorious destination, providing accommodations to travelers from the Parkdale train station, as well as visitors and exhibitors to the nearby Canadian National Exhibition. Over time, however, the Gladstone has gradually lost its lustre and has become less of a traveler's destination, he said. According to Gladstone Development Manager Christina Zeidler, one of the goals of the restoration was to reinterpret the commercial definition of the hotel as it enters its 11th decade of operation. "Our recent restoration efforts have rescued the Gladstone from decrepit decline and renewed this architectural landmark for a re-imagined future," she said. Zeidler said her vision for the future will allow the hotel to reflect the essence of the Parkdale area's lively art and design community. "The hotel is rooted in the Parkdale

community, not just in a physical sense, but also in a social sense," she outlined. "It is a place where artists show their work, perform, and more importantly, a place where neighbourhood people come just to hang out." "We have upgraded heating, electrical, and bathroom facilities, taking care to preserve the original details and flavour of the hotel," she said. According to Maher, 52 hotel rooms and suites are located on the second, third, and fourth floors, accessed by a grand staircase of a hand-operated Victorian elevator. All rooms feature hardwood floors, 12-inch baseboards, original restored brick and plaster walls with 10-to-14-foot ceilings. Reflecting the practice of hotel design when it was originally built, many of the hotel's rooms shared common washrooms on each floor, noted Maher. "We have re-done all of the suites and added a wash-room to each suite," he said. "We've also installed new flooring, new walls, new electrical, mechan-

ical, and life systems throughout the building." The first order of business when the project got underway last May was an extensive interior demolition. "We gutted the entire building, including almost all of the existing mechanical and electrical systems," Maher said. New plumbing, heating, ventilation and air-conditioning systems were up and running by February, while the new electrical and life-safety systems, to bring the structure up to building and safety codes, were operational by March, he noted. "We're currently in the process of re-constructing the elevator shaft and restoring all of its ornate mouldings and glazing," he said, regarding the Gladstone's hand-operated Victorian elevator and the last of its kind in Toronto. One of the challenges Maher faced during the renovation was coordinating construction activities in order to allow the hotel to maintain uninterrupted operation of its main floor bar and ball room. Maher was even

forced to dismantle and re-assemble exterior scaffolding in order to accommodate a film shoot. "The Melody Bar has remained open during the entire renovation process and Christina (Zeidler) has held a number of functions in the ball room," said Maher, who performed much of the demolition work on weekends. "It's been tough at times, but everybody has done their best to clean up, get ready, and go back to work on Monday." "We even had to remove the scaffolding for a weekend film shoot," he added. "The owners have been very co-operative and have given our site supervisor notice of events and we have accommodated them. We knew from the start that the hotel would remain operational while we performed our work," said Maher. As the project entered the home stretch last month, Maher was overseeing anticipated finishing work of carpenters, flooring

Continued on page 9



Continued from page 8

tradesmen and painters, in addition to a not so common contribution from a bevy of local artists. That's because the newly-renovated hotel will feature 15 rooms that have been individually designed by the local arts community. According to Zeidler, more than 27 different local artists are involved in room design and creation and selection of wall treatments. Twenty-two

artists are involved in room design, while five are overseeing the selection and application of wall treatments, she said. "Guests can experience Toronto art from within the comforts of one of the hotel's artist designed rooms, attend art related events held right in the hotel, and then step out into the heart of the city's art and design district of Parkdale and Queen Street West," she said. "Cookie cutter hotel rooms just wouldn't fit with the

diversity of events, people and experiences that the hotel has become known for. "Interior designs will range from fun and funky to sleek and sophisticated, while others are luxurious and elegant, reminiscent of the hotel's Victorian roots, she added. Sub-contractors taking part in the project include: Freve Challenger Electric, of Brampton; Vicor Mechanical, of Toronto; Westside Drywall, of Toronto; Bothwell-

Accurate Roofing, of Toronto; Rafina Hardwood Floors, of Toronto. Carpentry and glazing is being done by Innovative Building Systems, of Toronto. Masonry contractor is George Egan Construction, also of Toronto. Consulting was provided by E.C.E. Engineering and Jiri Tichy, of Tichy Designs.  
**www.maherconstructioninc.com.**

